NEW POEMS

WILLIAM WATSON

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BY REV. T. CALLAGHAN

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NEW POEMS

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THE POEMS OF
WILLIAM WATSON

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NEW POEMS BY WILLIAM WATSON

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NEW POEMS

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THE BLACKSMITH

'Tis the Tamer of Iron,
  Who smites from the prime,
And the song of whose smiting
  Hath thundered through time.

Like a mighty Enchanter
  Mid demons he stands —
Mid Terrors infernal,
  The slaves of his hands.

As a pine-bough in winter,
  All fringed with wild hair,
His arm too is shaggy,
  His arm too is bare.

And the bars on his anvil,
  They struggle and groan
Like a sin being fought with,
  That's bred in the bone;

But against them he knits his
  Invincible thews,
The Wrestler, the Hero,
  The Man That Subdues.

As a crag looking down on
  The floods in their ire,
He looms through the spray of
  His fountains of fire.

Is he human and mortal,
  With frailties like mine,
Or a demigod rather,
  Of lineage divine?

For the dread things of Nature
  Crouch low in his gaze:
The Fire doth his bidding;
  The Iron obeys.

He is Võland, great Võland,
  Whose furnaces roared
As he fashioned for Siegfried
  The wonderful Sword.

THE BLACKSMITH

"Whatsoever is mighty,"
  He sang in his glee,
"Twixt hammer and anvil
  Is fashioned by me."

And he made the bright blade from
  His rapture and joy,
Being one with the Gods who
  Create and destroy:

The Gods at whose signal
  The fuel was hurled
On the fires of the forges
  Whence issued the World.

SONNETS TO MIRANDA

I

Daughter of her whose face, and lofty name
Prenuptial, of old States and Cities speak,
Where lands of wine look north to peak on peak
Of the overwatching Alps: through her, you claim
Kinship with vanished Power, unvanished Fame;
And midst a world grown colourless and bleak
I see the blood of Doges in your cheek,
And in your hair the Titian tints of flame.

Daughter of England too, you first drew breath
Where our coy Springs to our coy Summers yield;
And you descend from one whose lance and shield
Were with the grandsire of Elizabeth,
When the Plantagenet saw the avenger Death
Toward him spurring over Bosworth field.

II

If you had lived in that more stately time
When men remembered the great Tudor queen,
To noblest verse your name had wedded been,
And you for ever crowned with golden rhyme.
If, mid Lorenzo's Florence, made sublime
By Art's Re-Birth, you had moved, a Muse serene,
The mightiest limners had revealed your mien
To all the ages and each wondering clime.

Fled are the singers that from language drew
Its virgin secrets; and in narrow space
The mightiest limners sleep: and only He,
The Eternal Artist, still creates anew
That which is fairer than all song — the grace
That takes the world into captivity.

III

I DARE but sing of you in such a strain
As may beseem the wandering harper's tongue,
Who of the glory of his Queen hath sung,
Outside her castle gates in wind and rain.
She, seated mid the noblest of her train,
In her great halls with pictured arras hung,
Hardly can know what melody hath rung
Through the forgetting night, and rung in vain.
He, with one word from her to whom he brings
The loyal heart that she alone can sway,
Would be made rich for ever; but he sings
Of queenhood too aloof, too great, to say
"Sing on, sing on, O minstrel"—though he flings
His soul to the winds that whirl his songs away.

IV

When, in your palace, amid whatsoe'er
Is most august and noble, I see you stand,
One of the greatest ladies of the land,
Almost it seems as if the marvels there,
The sacred things untarnishably fair
That grew from painter's or from sculptor's hand,
Had into warm and breathing life been fanned,
By puissant spell, in that enchanted air;—
By power and mandate of the Spirit divine
That, flashing forth from radiant Womanhood,
Can, with unuttered word and secret sign,
Waken insentient stone, inanimate wood;
Ev'n as it touches to melodious mood
This halting tongue and trembling heart of mine.

V

I CAST these lyric offerings at your feet,
And ask you but to fling them not away:
There suffer them to rest, till even they,
By happy nearness to yourself, grow sweet.
He that hath shaped and wrought them holds it meet
That you be sung, not in some artless way,
But with such pomp and ritual as when May
Sends her full choir, the throned Morn to greet.
With something caught from your own lofty air,
With something learned from your own highborn grace,
Song must approach your presence; must forbear
All light and easy accost; and yet abase
Its own proud spirit in awe and reverence there,
Before the Wonder of your form and face.

VI

I MOVE amid your throng, I watch you hold
Converse with many who are noble and fair,
Yourself the noblest and the fairest there,
Reigning supreme, crowned with that living gold.
I talk with men whose names have been enrolled
In England's book of honour; and I share
With these *one* honour — your regard; and wear
Your friendship as a jewel of worth untold.

And then I go from out your spherèd light
Into a world that still seems full of You.
I know the stars are yonder, that possess
Their ancient seats, heedless what mortals do;
But I behold in all the range of Night
Only the splendour of your loveliness.

VII

"MAN," said the chief of sophists, "is born
free,
And he is everywhere in chains." — Ah well,
There are beneficent bonds, and, truth to tell,
There is uncovetable liberty.
And you too wear the shackles men decree
For them of proudest station, and yet dwell
Untrammelled, mistress of the citadel
Of your own mind, *yourself* unchangeably.

And I, that oftentimes have gone astray
Ev'n from myself and wisest self-control,
Feel, when I see your outward beauty's ray
Shine cloudless, that all inward beauty too,
All sweetness of the heart and mind and soul,
Lady! is gathered up and sheaved in you.

VIII

If I had never known your face at all,
Had only heard you speak, beyond thick screen
Of leaves, in an old garden, when the sheen
Of morning dwelt on dial and ivied wall,
I think your voice had been enough to call
Yourself before me, in living vision seen,
So pregnant with your Essence had it been,
So charged with You, in each soft rise and fall.

At least I know, that when upon the night
With chanted word your voice lets loose your soul,
I am pierced, I am pierced and cloven, with Delight
That hath all Pain within it, and the whole
World's tears; all ecstasy of inward sight;
And the blind cry of all the seas that roll.

IX

If all the thoughts of all the minds of men
At last were stilled in night for evermore;
If all the sea should fade from all the shore,
And all the earth be as a dried-up fen;
Would not the Maker and Destroyer then
Look backward half-remorseful, and deplore
The ruined world Himself might not restore,
His own creation, withered from His ken?

Or would such things as here did bear in them
Intenser life-fire than the rest attain,
Live on, as at their highest, in spheres untrod
By meaner Being? — The might of Shakespeare's
brain;
The vast Compassion born at Bethlehem;
And Beauty perfect from the hands of God.

X

WHAT if that fieriest Substance found of late —
That cousin to the uranium of the sun —
Should be a cause of all that we have done
And dreamed and been? A source of Love and Hate,
Virtue and Valour — yea, and Beauty great
As yours? — And could all this be hid in one
Impassioned seed through æons, — known to none, —
Hid in one God-sown seed of Life and Fate?

Thus was the Genie of the Arabian tale
Sealed in a vial for a thousand years
Under the ocean, till a fisher's net
Drew forth the vial, and the fisher set
The captive free, — but shrank amazed and pale,
When the loosed Afreet towered against the Spheres.

XI

You dwell amidst a world not far below
Splendour of courts, and state of queens and
kings,
Yet cheer the halt and maimed, with ministerings
Of Love. The scoffer says, "*Your* radiant glow
But mocks *their* hopeless gloom!" It is not
so!
Rather do these thank God for her who brings
Morn, and a wafture of all fragrant things,
To hearts that little else of sunlight know.
Far be the day when Life shall have no more
Its hills and valleys, only one dead plain!
Myself am of the valleys, whence do soar
The peaks, and proud in valleys I remain;
Yet watch the mountains from the river shore,
Nor rail at heights I may not hope to gain.

XII

A few more days in this unkind July,
This moon of stormy countenance drear and wan,
And you will have departed to put on
The moors and mountains as a robe laid by,
And brought forth dipped in nature's Tyrian dye.
For me, here lingering where your light hath shone,
A glamour will have passed, a glory gone;
A paler earth will wear a greyer sky.

Yet none the less this City as of old
Shall throb with feverous heart-beats day by day:
And tower and spire shall catch the dear last ray
Of suns that bid adieu with kiss of gold:
Thames shall roll on, as long ago he rolled:
But you — but you will then be far away.

XIII

I KNEW it well; an enemy has been near.
Perhaps I may have met him at your door;
Perhaps I may have stood with him before
Those canvasses where Beauty rises clear
Of mist and shadow, and mortal forms appear
Immortal, for mortality to adore.
But what was that distillment he could pour
Unchidden, in the porches of your ear? *

It was the kinsman of the royal Dane,
No stranger at his gates, who did infuse
The drops that lulled a noble heart and brain
To untimely silence: O the sharper pain,
If it should be a kinsman in the Muse
Who came to wound me — and worse still, to stain.

* "And in the porches of mine ears did pour
The leperous distillment."
HAMLET, Act I. Sc. 5.

XIV

Too long I wear this mask that I have made, —
Rather, this woof of silken words, where each
Half shows me, half conceals: too long I teach
Truth to walk delicately in rich brocade,
And hide my heart, with cloth-of-gold arrayed.
I loved and love you — here is simple speech;
I loved and love you, who are out of reach;
There, take my secret stripped of lace and braid.

But what avails it? You give ear to those
Who buzz and flutter betwixt you and the sun;
And I am too disdainful of my foes
To answer them. Their web is poorly spun,
And easily I could shatter it if I chose.
But I am proud as you, Magnificent One!

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XV

I SHOULD have cleaved to her who did not dwell
In splendour, was not hostess unto kings,
But lived contented among simple things,
And had a heart, and loved me long and well.
Her, too, I loved; and left her — need I tell? —
For the triumphant light that round you clings;
I left her for the Heaven your presence brings;
I left her also for the pangs of Hell.

I hear the Midnight tolling to the sky.
The human tides ebb fast, that broke in foam
Far around London's great impassive Dome.
Somewhere asleep the happy meadows lie,
And sweet is there the savour of the loam.
And now, sweet dreams, sweet Lady! — And
good-bye!

XVI

THEN, 'twas the fancy of a fevered mind
That told me I was cast from your regard?
I felt as one that being of late bestarred
With honours hath by high command resigned
Each glittering badge — and now once more may bind
These on his breast! I was o'erworn and jarred;
I thought you for a moment cold and hard;
I know you now for ever just and kind.

Your written word brings life, and I can see
Those woodlands, and that terrace, whence you gaze
On the loved hills that were my early friends.
Too soon the hour of Youth's sweet turmoil ends;
But I shall hold in perpetuity
The bloom and odour of this day of days.

XVII

So hither you return, only to haste
Away to-morrow. And I too shall bide
The grandiose coming of the autumntide
Far from that world which you so late have graced.
You go unto your forests: you will taste
The forest sweetness where the wild deer hide,
That couch in bracken on the wild hill-side,
And in deep glens, and the storm-haunted waste.
And I shall fare through paths you have not known
To such repose as here no search can find;
And I shall wander forth all day alone,
Save that my cares will not lag far behind;
And you will have the mountains for your throne,
And hearts of men, and those calm heights of mind.

TO THE INVINCIBLE REPUBLIC

America! I have never breathed thy air,
Have never touched thy soil or heard the speed
And thunder of thy cities; yet would I
Salute thee from afar, not chiefly awed
By wide domain, mere breadth of governed dust,
Nor measuring thy greatness and thy power
Only by numbers: rather seeing thee
As mountainous heave of spirit, emotion huge,
Enormous hate and anger, boundless love,
And most unknown unfathomable depth
Of energy divine.
In peace to-day
Thou sit'st between thy oceans; but when Fate
Was at thy making, and endowed thy soul
With many gifts and costly, she forgot
To mix with these a genius for repose;
Wherefore a sting is ever in thy blood,
And in thy marrow a sublime unrest.
And thus thou keepest hot the forge of life,
Where man is still re-shapen and re-made
With fire and clangour.

And as thou art vast,
So are the perils vast, that evermore
In thine own house are bred; nor least of these
That fair and fell Delilah, Luxury,
That shears the hero's strength away, and brings
Palsy on nations. Flee her loveliness,
For in the end her kisses are a sword.
Strong sons hast thou begotten, natures rich
In scorn of riches, greatly simple minds:
No land in all the world hath memories
Of nobler children: let it not be said
That if the peerless and the stainless one,
The man of Yorktown and of Valley Forge, —
Or he of tragic doom, thy later born,
He of the short plain word that thrilled the world
And freed the bondman, — let it not be said
That if to-day these radiant ones returned,
They would behold thee changed beyond all thought
From that austerity wherein thy youth
Was nurtured, those large habitudes of soul.

But who are we, to counsel thee or warn,
In this old England whence thy fathers sailed?
Here, too, hath Mammon many thrones, and here
Are palaces of sloth and towers of pride.

Best to forget them! Round me is the wealth,
The untainted wealth of English fields, and all
The passion and sweet trouble of the Spring
Is in the air; and the remembrance comes
That not alone for stem and blade, for flower
And leaf, but for man also, there are times
Of mighty vernal movement, seasons when
Life casts away the body of this death,
And a great surge of youth breaks on the world.
Then are the primal fountains clamorously
Unsealed; and then, perchance, are dread things
born,
Not unforetold by deep parturient pangs.
But the light minds that heed no auguries,
Untaught by all that heretofore hath been,
Taking their ease on the blind verge of fate,
See nothing, and hear nothing, till the hour
Of some vast advent that makes all things new.

WALES: A GREETING

In that wild land beyond Sabrina's wave;
In vales full of the voice of bards long mute,
From Gwent to far Demetia by the sea;
Or northward unto cloud-roof'd Gwynedd, where
The mountains sit together and talk with heaven,
While Mona pushing forth into the deep
Looks back for ever on their musing brows:
By silent mound and menhir, camp and cairn,
Leaf-hidden stream, and cataract's thunderous plunge:
In summer calms, or when the storming North
Whitens Eryri's * crest and Siabod's † cone, —
Have I not roamed and lingered, from my youth,
An alien and a stranger, but amidst
A people gravely kind as suavely proud? —
A people caring for old dreams and deeds,
Heroic story, and far-descended song;
Honouring their poets, not in death alone,

* The Cymric name of Snowdon, pronounced Er-úrr-ee.
† Pronounced Shabbod.

But in life also, as is meet and well;
An ancient folk, speaking an ancient speech,
And cherishing in their bosoms all their past,
Yet in whose fiery love of their own land
No hatred of another's finds a place.

Sons — daughters — of Wild Wales, whose kindred swayed
This island, ages ere an English word
Was breathed in Britain, — let an English voice
Hail and salute you here at England's heart.
On Europe, east and west, the dim clouds brood,
Disperse, and gather again; and none can tell
What birth they hold within them. But we know
That should they break in tempest on these shores,
You, that with differing blood, with differing spirit,
Yet link your life with ours, with ours your fate,
Will stand beside us in the hurricane,
Steadfast, whatever peril may befall:
Will feel no separate heartbeats from our own,
Nor aught but oneness with this mighty Power,
This Empire, that despite her faults and sins

Loves justice, and loves mercy, and loves truth,
When truly she beholds them; and who thus
Helps to speed on, through dark and difficult
ways,
The ever-climbing footsteps of the world.

LONDON, *June* 15, 1909

THE WOMAN WITH THE SERPENT'S TONGUE

She is not old, she is not young,
The Woman with the Serpent's Tongue,
The haggard cheek, the hungering eye,
The poisoned words that wildly fly,
The famished face, the fevered hand,—
Who slights the worthiest in the land,
Sneers at the just, contemns the brave,
And blackens goodness in its grave.

In truthful numbers be she sung,
The Woman with the Serpent's Tongue;
Concerning whom, Fame hints at things
Told but in shrugs and whisperings:
Ambitious from her natal hour,
And scheming all her life for power;
With little left of seemly pride;
With venomed fangs she cannot hide;
Who half makes love to you to-day,
To-morrow gives her guest away.
Burnt up within by that strange soul

She cannot slake, or yet control:
Malignant-lipp'd, unkind, unsweet;
Past all example indiscreet;
Hectic, and always overstrung,—
The Woman with the Serpent's Tongue.

To think that such as she can mar
Names that among the noblest are!
That hands like hers can touch the springs
That move who knows what men and things?
That on *her* will *their* fates have hung!—
The Woman with the Serpent's Tongue.

ON THE CONCLUSION OF PEACE BETWEEN RUSSIA AND JAPAN

The lyre, 'tis said, in ages long ago,
Grew from the tense strings of the warrior's bow.
If Music once was born of hate and pain,
So be she born again!

HEAVEN AND HELL

"Speed not afar, thou wandering Wraith,
  Speed not afar, but tell
If thou hast climbed the towers of heaven,
  Or paced the crypts of hell."

"Heaven — what is heaven? 'Tis but to see
  Thy good deeds branch and bloom,
And know that they make sweet the earth,
  When thou art in thy tomb."

"And hell?" — "'Tis everlastingly
  Thine ill deeds to behold,
Each quick and warm, and multiplied
  An hundredfold."

"And thou thyself, dim-drifting Ghost —
  Liv'st thou in heaven or hell?"
"In both have I a halting place,
  In neither may I dwell!

"I watch my good and evil deeds
  Like marching armies pour,
And so 'twixt hell and heaven am torn
  For evermore."

THE STREAM AND THE TARN

The stream came plunging and leaping,
  And white was the crash of its glee.
Whence came it, a hunter unsleeping,
  In headlong hunt for the sea?

From the silent tarn up yonder!—
  The cloistered tarn, that abides
Where the guarding mountains ponder
  As they gaze on the far-off tides.

And there, immured from commotion,
  The cloistered tarn is at rest,
That has only dreamed of the ocean,
  And the heart of pearl in its breast.

THE PLAYMATES

The Wye and the Severn are offspring
  Of dark Plinlimmon's side;
And there they were nursed as playmates,
  And then — they were sundered wide.

In ways far parted they travel,
  By city and castled shore;
And at last, after great adventures,
  They meet — very old — once more.

They are kings, grown grey amid homage,
  And clothed with renown and pride;
But they babble of how they were playmates
  On dark Plinlimmon's side.

HATE

(To certain foreign detractors)

Sirs, if the truth must needs be told,
We love not you that rail and scold;
And, yet, my masters, you may wait
Till the Greek Calends for our hate.

No spendthrifts of our hate are we;
Our hate is used with husbandry.
We hold our hate too choice a thing
For light and careless lavishing.

We cannot, dare not, make it cheap!
For holy uses will we keep
A thing so pure, a thing so great
As Heaven's benignant gift of hate.

Is there no ancient, sceptred Wrong?
No torturing Power, endured too long?
Yea; and for these our hatred shall
Be cloistered and kept virginal.

TAVERN SONG

I

When winterly weather doth pierce to the skin,
Then hey! for a bottle of wine from the bin;
And hey! for a tankard, and ho! for a tankard,
Sing ho! for a tankard of ale at the inn.

It's hey! for a bottle, it's ho! for a bottle,
Sing ho! for a bottle of wine from the bin;
And it's hey! for a tankard, it's ho! for a tankard,
Sing ho! for a tankard of ale at the inn.

II

The squire's at the Hall with his kith and his kin;
He'll drink like a hero till daylight begin,
With hey! for a bottle, with ho! for a bottle,
A mellow old bottle of wine from the bin.

Sing hey! for a bottle, a mellow old bottle,
Sing ho! for a bottle of wine from the bin,

And sing hey! for a tankard, a right flowing tankard,
Sing ho! for a tankard of ale at the inn.

III

The parson, God bless him, he says it's no sin,
When winterly weather hath made the blood thin,
To toss off a tankard, to toss off a tankard,
To toss off a tankard of ale at the inn.
So it's hey! for a bottle, a bottle, a bottle,
It's ho! for a bottle of wine from the bin,
And it's hey! for a tankard, a heart-easing tankard,
It's ho! for a tankard of ale at the inn.

IV

For duns and the devil he cares not a pin
Who is rich in a bottle of wine from his bin,
And the cream of all wisdom is quaffed from a tankard,
A heart-easing tankard of ale at the inn.
Then hey! for a bottle, a mellow old bottle,
Then ho! for a bottle of wine from the bin,

And hey! for a tankard, a fair foaming tankard,
And ho! for a tankard of ale at the inn.

V

The lads must have lasses and woo them and win,
And the business of wives is to bake and to spin,
But men love a tankard, but men love a tankard,
But men love a tankard of ale at the inn.
Then hey! for a bottle, then ho! for a bottle,
Sing ho! for a bottle of wine from the bin,
And it's hey! for a tankard, a tankard, a tankard,
And ho! for a tankard of ale at the inn.

PAST AND PRESENT

Our fathers in the Georgian era
Shone over port and old Madeira.
We of this less robustious epoch
Excel in dulness over cheap hock.
And true enough, the thin potation
Suits the yet thinner conversation.

TO A FAIR MAIDEN WHO BADE ME SHUN WINE

And must I wholly banish hence
  These red and golden juices,
And pay my vows to Abstinence,
  That pallidest of Muses?

Must I impute caprice to Heaven?
  Its boons, must I pass by them,
As if they were perversely given
  Only that I should fly them?

Lady, I hold that Man grew great,
  And climbed to starry station,
Urged evermore by delicate
  And fine intoxication.

From little lordlier than the ape,
  Full slow had been his growing,
Had not the Grape, the mighty Grape,
  Kept Evolution going.

When through him first the vine-thrill ran,
  Then first his life was human!
Then burgeoned all the soul of Man,
  And all the heart of Woman.

His grand career was now begun,
  And naught could stay his crescence,
Who quaffed the Summer and the Sun
  In liquefied quintessence, —

A distillation of the Day,
  That most divinely sated
The very thirst the noontide ray
  Itself had generated.

And so the ages broadened still,
  And still mankind ascended;
And wise and foolish drank their fill
  And vowed the world was splendid;

And poets, cool from heights serene,
  Or hot from passion's furnace,
Found the unfailing Hippocrene
  In regions like Falernus.

But here I pause. The theme is vast,
  The sacred spring abundant.
One word — I hold it to the last —
  Makes all besides redundant:

Had mortals lacked the gift of wine,
  O Earth's too earthless daughter,
There had been no such lips as thine
  To grace the praise of water.

THE FISHER

The Fisher is a warrior
  Whose camp is on the foam,
And he returns from victory
  Bringing his captives home.

Home he brings his captives
  Beauteous to behold,
Some in silver armour,
  Some in mail of gold.

A little rest from warfare,
  And to-morrow again the field! —
Where the burnished legions all night long
  Have glimmered, and flashed, and wheeled.

THE FATAL PRAYER

"I VANQUISH," said the youthful King,
  "My foes on every field;
Yet, ye strong Gods, to one vain thing
  How helplessly I yield!

"Behold me fall'n a slave each hour
  To some dark long-lashed eye!
Oh, grant me, Kings of Heaven, the power
  That sorcery to defy."

They heard; and from their ruthless height
  The dreadful gift was thrown —
The armour against Beauty's might
  Worn by the blind alone.

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THE MOUND IN THE MEADS

This is the mound that holds the slain
Who came to the meads to fight the Dane,
Who came to the meads from hut and hall,
Fair-haired Saxons lusty and tall,
Earl and churl, and thane and thrall.

For they went not back to hut and hall:
On his golden bracelet swore the Dane
That none should be left uncleft in twain.
And this is the hillock that hides them all,
This is the mound that holds the slain.

For the Northman spared not great or small,
Him of the hut or him of the hall,
Earl or churl, or thane or thrall,
And this is the barrow that hides them all;
This is the mound that holds the slain.

TO M. W.

Kind, gentle friend, brought strangely low
By cruel blow on cruel blow;
You that so helpless here have lain,
Oft in the iron clutch of pain, —
Your tresses drifting like the Night
Over your pillow's world of white, —
Since April passed with gusty roar,
Till now great June is at the door:
Can it be true that all these weeks
You have but watched the endless freaks
Of clouds that without purpose roam,
Or seen the straggling rooks go home,
Or caught, with half-rebellious sigh,
(From thrush or blackbird trilling nigh)
Just for a moment, that wild thing,
The very soul of very Spring?

What can I counsel? Naught indeed:
For trite and tedious is the rede
That says: "Be patient and resigned,
And brave in heart and braced in mind."

TO M. W.

All this, and more, you are! And though
The journey back to health be slow,
You have about you on the way
Kindred who tend you night and day,
Strewing the path with blossoms sweet
To make it softer for your feet.

And you shall yet arise and see
Earth in her summer majesty;
Shall see her raised to height of pride,
Unboding yet of Autumntide;
Shall see her gorgeous in the brief
Pomp of the fated reddening leaf.
And lastly, all her revels o'er
And she a thing of joy no more, —
When she is pinched and gaunt and chill,
The torpid slave of Winter's will, —
In your own veins such life shall play
As dances at her heart to-day.

REVELATION

When all the choric peal shall end,
  That through the fanes hath rung;
When the long lauds no more ascend
  From man's adoring tongue;

When whelmed are altar, priest, and creed;
  When all the faiths have passed;
Perhaps, from darkening incense freed,
  God may emerge at last.

THE MOUNTAIN RAPTURE

CONTENTMENT have I known in lowlands green,
A quiet heart by mead and lisping rill,
But joy was with me on the cloven hill,
And in the pass where strife of gods hath been; —
Remembrance of that ecstasy terrene
Whence leapt the cataracts; an eternised thrill,
Coëval with the paroxysm that still
Writhes on the countenance of the seared ravine.
These peaks that out of Earth's great passions rose,
Wearing the script of rage, the graven pang,
The adamantine legend of her throes, —
These are her lyric transports! thus she sang,
With wild improvisation, — thus, with clang
Of fiery heavings, throbbed into repose.

THE HEART OF THE ROSE

The Poet talked with the happy Rose,
  And oft did the Rose repeat
How all her care was but to be fair,
  And all her task to be sweet.

Ah, rash was the Rose — the tragic Rose!
  She hath bared to the poet her heart!
And now he can take it, and crush and break it,
  And rich in its attar depart.

THE NEWS FROM THE FIELD

(Ballad)

The King to the battle, the Queen to her bower.
She sits with her maidens and chides the slow hour.
There cometh no message all day from the King,
And she chides the slow hour for the weight of its wing.

She climbs to the turret and scans the far ways;
She walks in green alleys, by pleasaunce and maze;
By cool-plashing fountain, by arbour and lawn;
By the dial so patient from dawn unto dawn.
On the terrace a bat flutters wavering by;
The sun is gone down off the steps of the sky;
And the peacock hath trailed his long splendours away
In the lull of the world at the droop of the day.

The birds to their perches, the Queen to her bower:
Her damsels make music to while the slow hour.
But she sits in their midst unregarding and mute:
She heeds not the cithern, she hears not the lute.

And hark, there are hoofs, — how they clatter and ring!
A message, a message is come from the King.
Who bringeth the tidings, at last, and so late?
A riderless charger, that neighs at the gate.

THE KNIGHTS AND THE KING

The Knights rode up with gifts for the King,
  And one was a golden sword,
And one was a suit of golden mail,
  And one was a golden Word.

He has buckled the shining armour on,
  He has girt the sword at his side;
He has flung at his feet the golden Word,
  And trampled it in his pride.

The armour is pierced with many spears,
  And the brand is breaking in twain;
But the Word has risen in storm and fire,
  To vanquish and to reign.

THE WINTER SLEEP

A MAIDEN o'erwearied
  With dance and song,
The Earth,
The Earth,
  The Earth sleeps long.

And her dreams are all
  Of one mad sweet thing —
The kisses,
The kisses,
  The kisses of Spring.

Awake, O maiden,
  For joy draws near.
Thy lover,
Thy lover,
  Thy lover is here.

RETRIBUTION

We shape our deeds and then are shapen by them.
To some frail heart a cruel gift we bring,
Turn from our acts away, and think to fly them:
Ah, theirs the stronger wing!

They come upon our peace with sound of weeping,
They find us though we hide in clefts and caves.
They are with us waking, they are with us sleeping,
And rend us in our graves.

SONNET

(To Richard Watson Gilder)

Take, Poet, take these thanks too long deferred —
You that have made me richer year by year,
Across the vast and desert waters drear
Wafting your marriage-chimes of thought and word,
Your true-born, truthful songs. Not April bird
Utters abroad his wisdom morning-clear
From fuller heart. Still sing with note sincere
And English pure as English air hath heard.
And so, though all the fops of style misuse
Our great brave language — tricking out with beads
This noble vesture that no frippery needs —
Help still to save, while Time around him strews
Old shards of empire, and much dust of creeds,
The honour and the glory of the muse.

THE ORGY ON PARNASSUS

(Lines written in my copy of Tennyson)

You phrase-tormenting fantastic chorus,
  With strangest words at your beck and call;
Who tumble your thoughts in a heap before us; —
  Here was a bard shall outlast you all.

You prance on language, you force, you strain it,
  You rack and you rive it, you twist it and maul.
Form, you abhor it, and taste, you disdain it,—
  And here was a bard shall outlast you all.

Prosody gasps in your tortured numbers,
  Your metres that writhe, your rhythms that sprawl;
And you make him turn in his marble slumbers,
  The golden-tongued, who outsings you all.

Think you 'tis thus, in uncouth contortion,
  That Song lives throned above thrones that fall?
Her handmaids are order and just proportion,
  And measure and grace, that survive you all.

Are these and their kin proscribed and banished?
  Serenely the exiles await recall,
To-morrow return, and find you vanished,
  You and your antics and airs and all.

You may flout convention and scout tradition,
  With courage as great as your art is small,
Where the kings of mind, with august submission,
  Have bowed to the laws that outlast you all; —

But brief is the life of your mannered pages;
  Your jargon, your attitudes, soon they pall:
You posture before the scornful ages,
  And here was a voice shall outlive you all.

For in vain is the praise of discord sounded
  Under the Muse's mountain wall.
With ritual old she is there surrounded;
  Her great decorum rebukes you all.

Her hill is not taken by storm or leaguer;
  The cliffs are sheer as the peaks are tall.
She foils in the clefts a pursuit too eager,
  And breathlessly followed eludes you all.

She is won as a bride, with reverent wooing,
  Not haled by the hair, a captor's thrall:
Such barbarous love is its own undoing;
  And here was a bard shall outlast you all.

CRITICISM

THERE were three critics; Slip and Slop
  And Slapdash were their names;
And all three said: "Your mission, sir?
  Your message? and your aims?"

"Kind gentlemen, to tell the truth,
  Nor colour fact with fable,
My chief concern is just to write
  As well as I am able.

"Mere honest work my mission is,
  My message, and my aim."
"A man of words," said Slip and Slop;
  And Slapdash said the same.

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE OAKLAND, CAL.

THINK you, demoiselle demure,
That to be cold is to be pure?
Pure is the snow — till mixed with mire —
But 'tis not half so pure as fire.

THE SCOTT MONUMENT, PRINCE'S STREET, EDINBURGH

HERE sits he throned, where men and gods behold
His domelike brow — a good man simply great;
Here in this highway proud, that arrow-straight
Cleaves at one stroke the new world from the old.
On this side, Commerce, Fashion, Progress, Gold;
On that, the Castle Hill, the Canongate,
A thousand years of war and love and hate
There palpably upstanding fierce and bold.
Here sits he throned; beneath him, full and fast,
The tides of Modern Life impetuous run.
O Scotland, was it well and meetly done?
For see! he sits with back turned on the Past —
He whose imperial edict bade it last
While yon grey ramparts kindle to the sun.

THE INN BY THE WOOD

The rank raw mist clung close like a hood,
But warm was the hearth at the Inn by the Wood;
And I supped right well, and the ale was good,
And comely the Maid of the Inn by the Wood.

Though the rank raw mist clung close like a hood,
The logs burned bright at the Inn by the Wood;
And a fair fat sirloin before me stood,
And I supped like a King at the Inn by the Wood.

THE CHURCHYARD IN THE WOLD

I WANDERED far in the wold,
  And after the heat and glare
I came at eve to a churchyard old:
  The yew-trees seemed at prayer.

And around me was dust in dust,
  And the fleeting light, and Repose —
And the infinite pathos of human trust
  In a God whom no man knows.

ON HEARING MADAME OLGA SAMAROFF PLAY

WHAT hopes and fears, what tragical delight,
What lonely rapture, what immortal pain,
Through those two hands have flowed, nor thrilled in vain
The listening spirit and all its depth and height!
Lovelier and sweeter from those hands of might
The great strange soul of Schumann breathes again;
Through those two hands the over-peopled brain
Of Chopin floods with dreams the impassioned night.
Yea, and he too, Beethoven the divine,
Still shakes men's bosoms with his bosom's throes,
O fair Enchantress, through those hands of thine;
And yet perchance forgets at last his woes,
Happy at last, to think that hands like those
Have poured out to the world his heart's red wine.

SONG FROM AN UNFINISHED DRAMA

Hope, the great explorer,
  Love whom none can bind,
Youth that looks before her,
  Age that looks behind,
Joy with brow like Summer's,
  Care with wintry pate,
Masquers are and mummers
  At Life's gate.

Pow'r with narrow forehead,
  Wealth with niggard palm,
Wisdom old, whose hoar head
  Vaunts a barren calm;
Haughty overcomers,
  In their pomp and state;—
Masquers all and mummers
  At Death's gate!

THE MUSCOVITE'S SONG

To the Great Bell in the Campanile of Ivan Veliky

Toll, thou mighty Moscow Bell;
Mighty news to nations tell.
Old things perish — toll their knell.
Toll, thou mighty Kremlin Bell.

Toll, thou far-resounding Bell.
Toll the captive from his cell.
Toll for them that faithful fell.
Toll, thou mighty Moscow Bell.

Toll, thou hollow-booming Bell.
Strong is Wrong, and 'stablisht well.
Stubborn are the forts of Hell:
Toll their fall, thou thunderous Bell.

Toll with vast and billowy swell,
Toll, thou mighty Kremlin Bell.
Long do men in darkness dwell:
Toll the Dawn, O Moscow Bell.

THOUGHTS

On revisiting a centre of commerce where a vast cathedral church is being erected

City of merchants, lords of trade and gold,
Traffickers great as they that bought and sold
When ships of Tarshish came to Tyre of old;

City of festering streets by Misery trod,
Where half-fed half-clad children swarm unshod,
While thou dost rear thy splendid fane to God.

O rich in fruits and grains and oils and ores,
And all things that the feastful Earth outpours,
Yet lacking leechcraft for thy leprous sores!

Heal thee betimes, and cleanse thee, lest in ire
He whom thou mock'st with pomp of arch and spire
Come on thee sleeping, with a scythe of fire.

Let nave and transept rest awhile; but when
Thou hast done His work who lived and died
for men,
Then build His temple on high, — not, not till
then.

AT A BURIAL

Lord of all Light and Darkness,
  Lord of all Life and Death,
Behold, we lay in earth to-day
  The flesh that perisheth.
Take to Thyself whatever may
  Be not as dust and breath —
Lord of all Light and Darkness,
  Lord of all Life and Death.

BIRTH AND DEATH

'Twas in another's pangs I hither came;
'Tis in mine own that I anon depart.
O Birth, thou doorway hung with swords of flame,
How like to Death thou art!

IN DREAMS

In dreams the exile cometh home;
  In dreams the lost is found;
In dreams the captive's feet may roam
  The world around.

In dreams thou may'st a monarch be,
  And sit upon a throne.
Give thanks, that this befalleth thee
  In dreams alone.

VIVISECTION

WILD nature not by kindness won, because
So seldom wooed that way; — thou melodist,
That singest only the eternal songs,
And changeless through the ages, conquerest Time;
Thou white-wing'd joy, skimming the white-lipp'd sea;
Thou antlered forest lord: nor ye alone —
The eminent and splendid ones of Earth —
But creatures nearer to Man's daily walk;
Thou timorous fugitive, obscurely housed
In populous labyrinth under hillock and holm;
Thou noble hound, with thy immortal gift
Of loving whom thou servest; dear allies,
Friends, and co-heritors of Life with me;
What Power devised and fashioned you I know not;
I know not, for my faith hath failed me sore;
But this I know: *whatever natural rights*
Be mine, are yours no less, by native dower:
If none entitled is to bind *me* down,

And rend, and mar, and rack, and break, and flay me,
None hath a title so to ravage *you*,
Saving such title as defames alike
Him that bestows and him that uses it.
This is the thing I know and doubt not of;
And this none taught me, but I drank it deep
From the pure well-spring of my mother's breasts,
Nor shall it die within me till I die.

LEOPOLD OF BELGIUM

Khalifs and Khans have we beheld, who trod
The people as one neck beneath their heel;
Whose revel was the woe they could not feel,
Whose pastime was the dripping scourge and rod;
Who shook swift death on thousands with a nod,
And made mankind as stubble to their steel;
Who slew for Faith and Heaven, in dreadful zeal
To pleasure Him whom they mistook for God.
No zeal, no Faith inspired this Leopold,
Nor any madness of half-splendid birth.
Merely he loosed the hounds that rend and slay
That he might have his fill of loathsome gold.
Embalm him, Time! Forget him not, O Earth!
Trumpet his name, and flood his deeds with day.

THE CHURCH TO-DAY

Outwardly splendid as of old —
Inwardly sparkless, void and cold —
Her force and fire all spent and gone —
Like the dead moon, she still shines on.

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THE LISTENERS

A Parable

The face of day is haggard,
  The eye of day is blear,
And troubled is the earth,
  For the storm steals near;
But the kine are in the grass-land,
  Grazing without fear,
And busily the mill-wheel
  Hums by the weir.

The kine are in the grass-land,
  Grazing without fear,
But the shepherd in the mountains
  And the sheep-dogs hear
The mutter of the thunder,
The first low thunder,
The rumble of the thunder
  On the moor and the mere.

THE STONES OF STANTON DREW

BLAND was the Morn, no speck or flaw
  Troubling her mien and hue,
When, mid the April fields, I saw
  The Stones of Stanton Drew.

Clear-hearted in the golden air
  The eternal lyrist flew;
But dark and full of silence were
  The Stones of Stanton Drew.

Isled and estranged from every mood
  Of all that lived and grew,
Deep in forgotten Time they stood —
  The Stones of Stanton Drew.

How many ages have gone by
  Since last a mortal knew
Who set you there, and when, and why,
  O Stones of Stanton Drew?

All sunlit was the Earth I trod,
  The Heaven was frankest blue;
But secret as the thoughts of God
  The Stones of Stanton Drew.

MAUREEN ASTHORE

My lovely wife, who yestermorn didst bring
  Thy youth and sweetness all to me alone —
Thine eyes of innocence and heart of spring —
    And madest them mine own;

My Bride from Erin — thou in whom I wed
  Not only thee but surely her as well —
Her of the ancient tears, the glories dead,
    The undying charm and spell, —

Maureen my Love! we wore her triple leaf, —
  At the altar steps her triple leaf we wore:
We must not in our joy forget her grief,
    Maureen Asthore.

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